



Drop, Cover, and Hold On Earthquake Drill Manual for Businesses



Level 4 – Advanced: Business Operations Drill

This drill includes all aspects of Level 2 and is an exercise for crisis management team personnel who have emergency response and/or business recovery duties in your business disaster plan (Business Continuity Plan). Where Level 3 is a “table-top” exercise for decision-makers to imagine potential consequences and solutions, this level involves simulated incidents to test your organization’s ability to respond and recover.

BEFORE the Drill

1. If you will participate in the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut, please register your Business as an official participant at www.shakeout.org/centralus.
 - Let your employees know whether registration will be at the corporate or departmental level or if separate office locations should register individually.
2. Bring together a team of individuals from your business to design the drill.
3. Determine the length, scope and objectives of your drill.
 - For example, you could test a specific part of your organization’s emergency plan for an hour.
 - If your facility serves the general public, determine whether you will involve them in the drill, treating this similar to a fire alarm during hours of public operation. You can also hold your drill before or after public hours; however, this limits the employees’ opportunity to practice quake-safe actions.
4. Learn about potential earthquakes for your area and use your team to develop your own “business disaster scenario” with specific details of how you might expect the shaking to impact your business (i.e., the building, operations, production chain, employees, and customers). For ideas, review the ShakeOut Scenario at www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario. Consider the following:
 - Would the power be out? Phone and/or internet communications down? Loading dock severely damaged?
 - How will you direct employees during and immediately following the shaking?
 - Consider that certain factors (your location, building type, damage impacts) will influence your decisions regarding what to do immediately after the earthquake (i.e., evacuating vs. staying put) and in the longer term (how to interface with customers).
 - Identify who is authorized to make and communicate post-earthquake decisions.
 - If your business has “floor wardens” for fire evacuation, how will you use them after an earthquake, especially if you do not evacuate?
 - Make sure the impacts you determine for your “business disaster scenario” make it possible to support your drill objectives.
 - Note: If you “wipe-out” the whole community, you eliminate your reason to drill.
5. Invite your key business decision-makers and leaders (Crisis Management Team) to your drill. Have them review your plan prior to the drill.
6. Select a facilitator to run the drill. Determine other staffing role requirements such as assigning personnel as evaluators to document drill activities in chronological order.
7. Conduct training for all drill participants (and their designated back-ups) who are assigned emergency positions so they are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. All participants, back-ups, evaluators and decision-makers should be familiar with the disaster plan.
8. Create a timeline for your drill, such as:
 - **10:15:00 a.m.** – Earthquake starts, employees *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*.
 - **10:15:20 a.m.** – Lights go out and computers go down.
 - **10:15:40 a.m.** – Sprinklers in SE corner of first floor turn on.



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9. Separately from the timeline, create a list of “injected events”. “Injects” are surprise events that could reasonably occur during the drill (e.g., aftershocks, specific problems related to your business, etc.). These events can be “injected” (provided) to the participants in the form of a note, a 3x5 card, a person acting out a role in the drill (i.e., heart attack or injury, etc.) periodically to get participants thinking of issues and solutions without overwhelming them.

10. **(Optional)** Download realistic sound effects to add realism and safety information to use during your drill from www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources. (*Download and test before the drill. Don't try to play them from the web site during the drill.*)

11. Let your employees know:

- The date and time of your drill
- How to correctly perform *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, wherever they are (www.dropcoverholdon.org), which includes taking cover beneath a sturdy table or desk, or dropping to the floor near an interior wall and covering your head with your hands and arms. Develop special procedures for unique locations such as warehouses or offices with glass walls.
- Your expectations for their participation (i.e., *Drop, Cover and Hold On*, gather at a designated location for a head count, play a role such as a “drill injured” that will need medical assistance, and/or having post-drill discussions, etc.).
- If your drill is part of the Great Central U.S. ShakeOut, encourage employees, customers, etc., to invite friends, families, and neighbors to register as individuals or organizations at www.shakeout.org/centralus so they can participate and receive information directly on how to be safe during an earthquake.

12. Determine whether to add post-shaking building evacuation to the drill: Based on the age and type of your building and the environment inside/outside of building, etc., determine whether you would evacuate after an earthquake, or whether you would first *assess the building's damage* before directing employees to either stay put or evacuate. Consider what new safety hazards outside of your facility might be caused by the earthquake from fallen or broken objects (both in the building and outside) or ground deformation. ***Automatic evacuation after an earthquake may not be a safe action.***

13. Write a brief description of the earthquake's impact on your business/facilities using your “business disaster scenario” along with some questions for employees to consider. For ideas, review the ShakeOut Scenario at www.shakeout.org/centralus/scenario.

The Night BEFORE the Drill

Tape the brief description of the earthquake's impact under desks and conference tables or provide employees sealed envelopes to open during the drill. (*You can use email, but it is more effective if they do not read this until during the drill.*)

DURING Drill

1. Via your PA system, e-mail, cell phone/text reminder or verbally:

- Announce that the earthquake drill has begun and strong shaking could last one minute.
- **(Optional)** Play the downloaded sound effects (<http://www.shakeout.org/centralus/resources>) on your PA system or on a computer in each office.
- Tell everyone to *Drop, Cover, and Hold On*, then remove the earthquake info taped under their desk or open their envelope, as appropriate.
- Suggest that while down on the floor, employees look around at what could be falling on them in an earthquake. (These items should be secured or moved after the drill).

2. If not using optional downloaded sound effects, announce that the shaking is over after at least one minute.

3. Announce the beginning of the Business Operations Drill and for employees to follow their response procedures.

4. Provide the timeline of events to all participating employees with instructions to undertake their emergency roles.



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5. As the drill progresses distribute individual “inject events” to specific participants. Have drill evaluators observe and document how these surprise issues are handled.

6. When the drill duration time is met, announce that the Business Operations Drill is over.

AFTER the Drill

1. Assemble the facilitator and evaluators with their documentation to summarize activities, actions, decisions, and solutions from the drill.

- Discuss whether you met your drill objectives and why.
- Document lessons learned, best practices and necessary actions to improve your employee training, emergency procedures, and incorporate into the disaster plan (Business Continuity Plan).

2. Hold staff meetings/“hot wash”/brief outs as soon as possible after the drill so employees/staff can discuss and document what happened during the exercise, what decisions were made, what worked and what didn’t, etc. Take this opportunity to:

- Discuss preparedness at work and at home. (Employees’ home/family preparedness will allow them to either stay at work (or return to work more rapidly) to support your company’s recovery).

3. Next, assemble Business Operations Drill participants including your decision-makers and leaders:

- Depending on the size of your organization, may need to have emergency or departmental teams meet separately, followed by a leadership meeting with reps from each team.
- Discuss and document what happened during the exercise, what decisions were made, what worked and what didn’t, etc.
- Listen attentively to staff suggestions.
- Encourage sharing lessons learned from the drill or real experiences.
- Review pre- and post-disaster employee responsibilities.
- Discuss need to update emergency contact lists and any other critical documents in plan.
- Discuss any changes to your safety and business resumption priorities.
- Discuss possible changes to company staff emergency responsibilities.
- Cover the importance of preparedness at work and at home, encouraging participation.
- Document and accept all comments then thank all the participants to officially end the drill.

4. At your Business Continuity Planning management level:

- Review lessons learned and recommendations to be added to the plan.
- Update staff and management emergency responsibilities.
- Discuss process to keep critical documents up to date.
- Determine or assign staff update your disaster plan (Business Continuity Plan) with lessons learned from the drill.
- Review the updated Business Continuity Plan with recommended safety and operations resumption priorities and procedures.

5. Determine next steps and assign people to those tasks to follow-up.

- Schedule training as needed due to plan changes/updates.
- Make sure future drills follow training so that employees can test the most current/new earthquake procedures.

6. Take the newly updated Business Continuity Plan and get executive sign-off (which is easier if they participated in the drill).

7. Schedule your next drill one year from now (or sooner if employees need more practice or if the plan is change/updated).

8. Share photos and stories at www.shakeout.org/centralus. (A link will be available on this web site for uploading these following the ShakeOut.)

9. Review “7 Steps to an Earthquake Resilient Business” for additional ideas, available at www.earthquakecountry.org/roots.

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